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US AIRLIFT MOBILITY

Too Little - Too Late

by

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8 APRIL 1994

America needs a reality check! Our crazed lust for reduced federal spending has resulted in a Congressional hunt for the "Peace Dividend" that makes the Salem Witch Hunts look like a Sunday school outing. With the fall of the former Soviet Union, some Americans seem to think the country has outgrown its need for the military. According to Secretary of Defense Perry, defense spending, now at 3.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is heading towards 2.8 percent in 1999. These are historic lows. Table 1 translates those GDP theories into simple before and after comparisons.¹

	<u>1990</u> Cold War	<u>1995</u> Post-Cold War
Army Divisions	28	20
Aircraft Carriers	16	12
Fighter Wings	36	20.5

Table 1: Cold War and Post-Cold War Forces

Even with these dramatic force reductions and the even more dramatic force withdrawals from overseas bases, some American defense "thinkers" recommend even greater cuts. The Center for Defense Information (CDI) recently published these conclusions.

- None of the Wars going on around the world today endanger the United States.

- None of the current or foreseeable wars justify the Pentagon's plan to maintain large, expensive Cold War military forces deployed around the world.
- The decline in war and the emergence of peace-seeking democracies around the world have enhanced US security.

The CDI goes on to recommend more reductions that would equate to approximately one-third of the 1995 column in Table 1.²

No matter what size military force the country buys, unless Canada or Mexico invades, our forces are useless unless we can move them to where we need them. If we expect "Gulf War" style results, these forces must arrive quicker than the potential badguys.

General Douglas MacArthur supposedly once said that all military failures can be summed up in two words--Too Late! The theory that victory goes to the side that gets there "first with the most" goes back throughout the history of warfare. As a result of our successes in the Gulf, the American public demands low casualties, precision warfare. Yet to provide the overwhelming force needed to insure low risk our military forces must beat any potential aggressor to the battlefield.

This quickness results from the planning that military experts label "mobility doctrine." The mobility doctrine we had during the Gulf War seemed to work. But what about now? If the United States had to go back to the Gulf right now, could we get there in time? How has the

force reductions and the resulting reorganizations impacted our mobility? Did the massive withdrawal of US forces from overseas bases help or hurt our mobility? Is the United States really not endangered by these smaller regional conflicts? By examining US mobility doctrine and the implementing strategy of the last three decades, with emphasis on airlift, the reasons for our Gulf War success will become apparent. Comparing the pre-Gulf War mobility situation with today's may provide some sobering thoughts.

US MOBILITY DOCTRINE

To understand US mobility thinking, first understand the US concept of the threat. Reading from the SECDEF *Annual Report to Congress, FY 1984*, the Soviet Union poses and will continue to pose the most formidable threat. Likewise, in the 1988 report of the Commission On Integrated Long-Term Strategy, two extreme threats have long dominated our strategic thinking--the massive Warsaw Pact attack on Central Europe and an all-out Soviet nuclear attack.³ It is clear that for the last several decades, US mobility strategy was tailored to a European war. In Desert Shield, the policies and strategies adopted beginning in the mid-1960s and refined in the 1970s and 80s proved their validity even outside a European scenario.

Airlift Organization Debate

As early as 1960, Congress was beginning to ask questions about airlift's responsiveness to the war fighters and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1962, upon his return from Vietnam, then Air Force Chief of Staff, General Curtis LeMay, was quoted as saying, "There's no effective airlift system..." in the Pacific. This impression came about because there was a confusing mass of route structures, aerial port responsibilities, and command and control (C²) relationships.⁴ Besides the Military Airlift Command (MAC) flights coming from the States, two airlift divisions--the 315th and the 834th--scheduled missions for the Pacific Air Force (PACAF) and the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). At one point, PACAF had seven flights per week operating between Clark Air Base, Philippines, and Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam. Simultaneously, MAC operated 21 flights on the same route.⁵ Sometimes, these aircraft were not full. At peak times, cargo would backlog in the ports because only one offload site--Tan Son Nhut--was authorized, and all flights entered Vietnam there.⁶

Military transporters believed the inefficiency was due to the number of responsible commands. Too, many cooks were spoiling the stew! As a result, an airlift consolidation debate began.

In the 1965-66 hearings of the Special Subcommittee on Military Airlift, Congressman L. Mendel Rivers wanted to review the status of

military airlift in terms of modernization, responsiveness to world-wide needs, and tactical airlift needs. This was the second time in five years congress had reviewed these issues. Even though the consolidation debate was tabled at the end of this investigation, the positions of both sides were well articulated. The anti-consolidation concerns were:

- strategic airlift (Travis to Bien Hoa) was too different from tactical airlift (Bien Hoa to an assault strip); one organization cannot do both.

- aircrew training was too different, too much for the crews to handle.

- consolidation would dilute the "tactical" nature of tactical airlift or erode the warrior spirit.⁷

The pro-consolidation position made these points:

- airlift capability is considered an entity-one system. Permanent organizational fragmentation of this resource in any manner decreases its optimum efficiency and effectiveness. The organization of airlift forces includes a centrally directed command and control system with decentralized operational command to insure orderly and timely application of airlift resources in all methods of employment.

- aerial port assets are critical; sharing assets increases efficiency.

- increasing capabilities and changing requirements are best managed within a single functional system.⁸

So, in the final analysis, both sides talked about system function and the service to the customer. Pro-consolidation forces believed they would create efficiencies and synergies in the entire system, particularly in the C² area. The anti-consolidation forces focused on the combat power application to the battlefield and wanted to keep "tactical" airlift forces focused on battlefield needs.

Vietnam Airlift Lessons

In Vietnam, they did keep tactical focus. Unquestionably, actions like Khe Sanh, Khom Duc, An Loc, and Kontum validate the "combat" focus of tactical airlift operations. Likewise, these same airlift managers kept airlifters hamstrung by limiting offload sites, until 1968 when changes were demanded. These same managers finally began to coordinate loads and improved efficiency. But, only after Congressional hearings and the 1968 Tet Offensive forced a higher degree of cooperation between MAC, PACAF, and MACV. Of particular interest was the deactivation of the 315th AD (PACAF) in April 1969, thereby streamlining the coordination process. This came near the peak of MAC's intra-theater missions.⁹

Gulf War Airlift Application

Comparing pre-consolidation Vietnam with the post-consolidation Gulf War is very difficult. The duration of involvement, distance from the US, and even the number and kind of aircraft available make any quantifiable comparison marginally useful (See Figure 1).¹⁰ However, the same policy mistakes were avoided.

A PROUD HERITAGE . .	
Berlin Airlift	2.3 Million Tons in 463 days
Peak of Vietnam	42,200 Tons in 30-day period
Nickel Grass	21,190 Tons in 33-day period
Just Cause	20,675 Tons in 26 days

Figure 1

Even including the turbulent early days when requirements changed frequently, the overall efficiency, measured by use of available cabin load, significantly improved. However, a lot of that improvement probably resulted from airlift system maturity over the last 20 years. Just like Vietnam, we were originally limited to one offload base in theater. However, within days that problem was solved thanks to the theater airlift division established by CINCMAC, within the CINCCENTCOM forward headquarters. This single agency managed both inter- and intra-theater airlift for CINCCENTCOM. The praise heaped on

the theater and strategic airlift fleets prove that the warfighter was pleased with the combat nature of his theater airlifters.¹¹

Did all of the theater problems go away? Absolutely not, but they did get quick attention and were usually successfully resolved. An excerpt from General H. T. Johnson's (CINCTRANSCOM) oral history interview offers an example.

Dr. Matthews: You mentioned that you didn't quite appreciate the en route support in the early stages. Of course, Germany and Spain, in particular, gave us tremendous en route support for airlift, as did Portugal in the Azores for tankers and airlift. Was there something more that our allies could have provided in regard to that issue?

General Johnson: I wasn't talking about the support from our allies. Frankly, we had a difficult time getting support from some USAFE [United States Air Forces Europe] bases. We had good support from Rhein-Main [Air Base, Germany], but Torrejon [Air Base, Spain] was reluctant to give us additional space on their parking ramp. The Spanish commander moved his forces before the US commander moved his to give us more space. In fact, the US commander only responded after we went to USAFE and demanded space.

Dr. Matthews: Please elaborate on the problems encountered by airlifters at USAFE bases.

General Johnson: I would be very critical of the support we received from the Air Force. My biggest criticism is for Torrejon Air Base. Our crews were treated more as a profit potential for the base's MWR [Morale, Welfare, and Recreation] office than as members of the Air Force Team. I know because I visited there. The base had closed the Officers' Club and stopped selling beer in the billeting office. They then opened a beer sales shop with jacked-up prices. They provided few opportunities for our people to eat. They put them three to a room to get higher rates for their rooms,

while Air Force members from other commands stayed one to a room. We were treated worse than any foreign country would treat us. We were treated better at Utapao in Thailand than we were by the base at Torrejon, initially. We eventually got that squared away.

Dr. Matthews: How?

General Johnson: I visited Torrejon, and I was treated very, very shabbily. I called my classmate and friend, General Bob Oaks [Robert C., Gen, USAF, Commander in Chief, United States Air Forces Europe]--they found him on vacation in Monaco and went down the long list of things that needed fixing, and the support got better very quickly.

Dr. Matthews: Were there similar problems in the AOR [area of responsibility]?

General Johnson: We also had MAC people who went into Dhahran [Saudi Arabia] who were not given access to quarters. They were not allowed to eat in the TAC [Tactical Air Command] dining hall. One MAC unit had to go to the 82nd Airborne to find quarters. So, I was very disappointed about how the Air Force treated us.¹²

The "shabby" treatment General Johnson's airlift force received could have significantly delayed the flow of forces. It did not because the single airlift manager was able to focus the attention of the theater commanders using his 4-star authority. Without that kind of emphasis, the airlift forces would have had no single champion of their cause.

Besides the airlift organizational debate, several other elements of US mobility forces experienced major improvements. To appreciate the size and scope of these improvements, the American public needs to understand how the problems were identified.

MOBILITY SHORTFALL WORKAROUNDS

Seventeen major mobility studies between 1974 and 1981 concluded that airlift requirements far exceeded capabilities. In the 1980s, the Congressional Mandated Mobility Study (CMMS) focused on four different scenarios: a regional conflict in the Persian Gulf, a Soviet invasion of Iran, a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict, and a Persian Gulf conflict with a precautionary reinforcement in Europe. Using the available weight and size requirements of the units requiring deployment, analysts calculated that we needed a lift capability of 83 million ton miles/day (mtm/d). Since we only had 42 mtm/d, defense planners recognized that the nation could not afford to buy double that capability. They settled on a target of 66 million ton miles. Their calculations were based on an average deployment distance of 2,468 miles and used a mix of C-141, C-5, and civil aircraft. The remaining shortfall in lift capability was addressed by a combination of pre-positioning and unit modernization.¹³ In general then, our mobility doctrine consisted of a "triad" of improved airlift, fast sealift, and pre-positioned equipment. A 1965 message from then President Johnson to Congress on American defenses itemized the following mobility strategy elements:

- expansion of airlift, improvement of sealift and more pre-positioned equipment
- development of C-5 aircraft
- construction of fast sealift ships with turbine propulsion
- expansion of forward-floating depot ships

This general list was followed right through 1984.¹⁴

Air Force Pre-positioning

The Air Force began stockpiling war readiness material (WRM) at most European airfields where US forces would deploy. These WRM assets included engine stands, power carts, vehicles, and numerous other items which were required to fight, but could be stored with minimum maintenance. This stockpiling meant that fighter wings coming from the US would not have to bring the equipment with them. Therefore, airlift requirements were reduced. The Air Force also created a network of aerial ports of debarkation (APODS). These aerial ports had Military Airlift Command units permanently assigned. Characteristically, these APODs had (1) large aircraft parking ramps; (2) good permanent communications; (3) reliable large fuel supplies; and (4) large cargo and passenger handling capabilities. In January 1990, Europe's primary peacetime APODS were Incirlik AB, TU; RAF Mildenhall, UK; Rhine Main AB, GE; Ramstein AB, GE; and Torrejon AB, SP. Smaller secondary APODs were also established at Aviano AB, IT; Sigonella NAS, IT; and Rota NAS, SP. All of these locations had Military Airlift Command people and equipment permanently assigned.¹⁵ These facilities were capable and the people were familiar with large airlift aircraft management. Moreover, they had well exercised, expansion capabilities thanks to their own pre-propositioned WRM. Had the Warsaw Pact threatened attack, these specialists and their equipment would have spread out to the fighter reception bases and helped unload deploying fighter squadrons.¹⁷

POMCUS

The US Army had similar pre-positioning plans only on a larger scale. Pre-propositioned Material Configured for Unit Sets (POMCUS) stored all kinds of goods for entire brigades. Six massive storage complexes with hundreds of warehouse buildings spread out over Western Germany and the Benelux countries. Well maintained and ready for issue, these POMCUS supplies meant that only the soldiers and certain high value equipment required transport from the US to Europe.¹⁷

MPS/APF

In the Middle East, applying the same pre-positioning techniques, US war planners had stored some material ashore. However, having no major real estate assigned, US planners had no guarantees about accessibility to shore-based supplies. Therefore, they developed storage capabilities afloat. Maritime Pre-positioned Ships (MPS) and the Afloat Pre-propositioning Fleet (APF) were conceived. Storing Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps equipment, these floating warehouses gave us the flexibility to put our material ashore wherever the warfighter could find a secure port.¹⁸

Aerial Refueling/Fast Sealift

Finally, two other elements of mobility strategy grew out of decisions made in the 1970s. First, during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, US airlift kept Israel from succumbing, according to then Prime Minister Golda Meir.¹⁹ However, because most European countries feared Arab oil

embargoes, they refused the US landing rights for flights to Israel. Only Portugal allowed us to use one base--Lajes. During this emergency resupply, Lajes became the bottleneck. Try as we might, only so much airflow could go across one limited ramp. It was barely enough. As a result of this experience, the US bought air refueling modifications for the C-141 and increased the number of aerial refueling qualified C-5 air crews, thereby reducing our dependence on ramp space and increasing our flexibility.²⁰ Second, in the early 1980s, US transporters were able to buy eight new Fast Sealift Ships (FSS) designed specifically to wait in storage, immediately ready to pick up any required loads and deliver in ten days to Europe, less than one-half the normal time.²¹

MOBILITY DOCTRINE USED IN THE GULF

Described as the worst case scenario by General H. T. Johnson, CINCTRANSCOM, Desert Shield arrived with little or no warning. Without significant US land force in theater, the first 12 days (2-15 August) were most critical because we were uncertain about Iraq's intentions toward the Saudi oil fields.²² Although a 1984 Joint SECAF and CSAF report noted that "in almost all instances the urgent early demands of a crisis must be met entirely by airlift," as a community we were not completely ready to respond. CENTCOM's wartime force list had not been refined and everyone thought their unit deserved priority movement. The CENTCOM staff revised its announced movement priorities based on the proximity of the Iraqi armored threat.²³

Brought to action by White House directions, the contingency response staffs at USTRANSCOM and HQ MAC got the first support missions launched on 7 August, but earlier, on 6 August, those APODs in Europe had already begun to transform.²⁴ To help kill Iraqi armor if it came south, the first priorities for CENTCOM were fighter squadrons, the 82nd Airborne, and the combat support units needed to receive and break out pre-positioned WRM assets as well as MPS/APF ships. All of these earliest priorities moved by airlift coming through Europe.²⁵

European Airlift Pipeline

As the main peacetime airports, Rhine Main and Torrejon began to fill up first. In short order, Ramstein and Mildenhall got busy. Too far north, Mildenhall slipped out of the principle airlift flow about 13 August when Zaragoza AB, SP, began to receive airlifters.²⁶ Quickly, WRM assets like forklifts, cargo loaders, pallets, and nets were removed from storage and put into the flow going through each port. Airlift managers in Europe moved to segregate the flow. Rhine Main and Torrejon became principle C-5 enroute stops while Ramstein and Zaragoza handled mostly C-141s. (See Figures 2 and 3)

Synergies were identified and developed. Rhine Main and Ramstein are only 90 minutes driving time apart, just 20 minutes flying time. Therefore, they routinely supported each other's shortages. Personnel,

equipment, and aircraft parts were often swapped between bases. Similar relationships developed between Torrejon and Zaragosa. However, with a greater distance between these two bases than the pair in Germany, Air Force operators used small C-23 cargo airplanes to shuttle back and forth in Spain.²⁷ As commercial aircraft entered the airlift on 8 August, they staged through civil airports at Cologne, Köln-Bonn, and Frankfurt.

Besides the APODs, other reception/WRM airfields began to transform their maintenance and repair facilities into rear area depot maintenance sites. Hahn, Bitburg, Sembach, and Spangdahm Air Bases, all in Germany, all close to Ramstein and Rhine Main airlift nodes, began to network their capabilities to support jets in the desert.²⁸

Much later, other networks would be established by taking advantage of plans made earlier to fight the war in Europe. RAF Upper Heyford, UK; RAF Mildenhall, UK; Rhine Main AB and Ramstein AB, Germany, would network with the medical evacuation system established to airlift projected casualties. Likewise, RAF Fairford, RAF Mildenhall, UK; Moron AB, SP; and other still-classified locations supported direct combat operations of long-range aircraft flying into the Gulf. All of these bases required less build-up because pre-positioned WRM assets were available. Existing facilities were usually quickly opened and brought up to speed.²⁹

In November 1990, President Bush decided to ensure sufficient offensive capability was available to eject Saddam Hussein from Kuwait by ordering deployment of the US VII Corps from Europe to the Gulf. This unit moved from their German bases to the desert. Much of this heavy movement went by sea.³⁰ However, the distance was cut in half because it had been pre-positioned in Europe.

One side note is worth mentioning here. When Desert Shield turned to Desert Storm, a critical requirement arose to move Patriot missile batteries to Israel. Some of those missiles had to come from the US. But, the first to arrive and employ came from Europe in less than 22 hours. Details of that move remain classified, but proximity made a major difference in response time.³¹

Gulf War Mobility Results

By the end of the 80s, the primary airlift elements of our mobility strategy were fully developed based on European war planning: all three phases of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) were in place; both C-141 and C-5 fleets had completed their upgrades and expansion; the C-5B buy was complete; and, the C-141B stretch and air refueling modifications were done. Marine, Army, and Air Force units had major stockpiles prepositioned in Europe and some in the Gulf. Perhaps most

importantly, 300,000 US troops, including 2 Army corps were still forward-based in Europe.³²

Although the C-17 was not available for Desert Shield, the C-141, C-5, and CRAF capabilities gained in earlier decades were well tested. Over 90 percent of the C-141s and 95 percent of the C-5s were used. CRAF Stage I and II were called for the first time since it was created in 1951.³³ Aerial refueling proved mostly unnecessary because of the availability of enroute airfields and the absolute need for tankers to support other customers like fighters and bombers.³⁴ With near maximum cargo loads, C-5 and C-141 unrefueled range is approximately 3,000 miles, about 20 percent more than the distance to Europe. Furthermore, the second leg from Europe into the Gulf was approximately the same distance. This "coincidence" minimized the utility of aerial refueling. Some problems resulted when parking ramps became full of airlifters waiting for refueling. For a short time, flow managers played with aerial refueling over Saudi Arabia in an attempt to solve these parking problems, but the attempt was abandoned when other solutions were identified.³⁵

Perhaps pre-positioning proved to be the star element of our mobility policy. Combined with the speed and flexibility of airlift, the WRM pre-positioned in Europe and in the desert arrived quickly--first MPS in seven days--and provided nearly immediate deterrence. Thanks

to airlift, the breakout personnel were there on the dock waiting for the MPS/APF cargo.³⁶ Likewise, pre-positioned stockpiles in Europe cut in half the distance supplies had to travel. Therefore, nearly all those POMCUS and WRM supplies paid big dividends.

The inescapable fact remains that forward basing in Europe MAY have saved the day in the Gulf. Although we will never really know what Saddam Hussein's intentions were in those early days after the Kuwait invasion. The first forces delivered between 7 and 15 August were delivered by airlift, airlift that crossed the ramps at Rhine Main, Ramstein, Torrejon, or Zaragosa. The speed of the US reaction was assured because we could almost instantaneously expand those critical enroute support capabilities.

In total, most of the strategy and doctrine elements designed and refined during the previous three decades served the US very well. Only airlifter aerial refueling seemed less useful than anticipated. However, we need to understand that the beddown and reception airfields we established to fight the war in Europe were not used as we planned. Instead, we used them as enroute and rear area support bases. Without these locations, significantly more time would have been required to establish the airlift flow.

CURRENT MOBILITY STATUS

Since the Gulf War and in the name of budget reductions (i.e., cashing in on the peace dividend), many significant changes in mobility capabilities have taken place.

First, airlift consolidation has changed. The reorganized Air Force puts air refueling and strategic (intertheater) airlift assets under one command. Tactical (intratheater) airlift assets are divided between three or four commands. Also, divided are the aerial port and command and control (C²) forces.³⁷ Although a significant portion of the enroute C² assets remains linked to the mobility commander, a dilution or decentralization of authority and responsibility has taken place.

Second, the fleet of 200+ C-141s and 100+ C-5s served extremely well during Desert Shield. However, structural problems plague the C-141. At one point in early 1994, only 78 aircraft out of the entire fleet were partially or fully mission capable. For a variety of reasons, the other delayed C-17 still seems a long way from helping. The latest government move was to confirm a buy of only 40 C-17s until McDonald-Douglas improved contract performance. So seemingly desperate are the problems that recently Air Force officials began talking with Boeing Aircraft Company about a military version of the 747-400.³⁸

Third, the star of our mobility success in the Desert--prepositioning--remains well entrenched in our mobility strategy. But an

insidious problem has developed that the American public and military planners must address. Much of the prepositioned mobility capability rested in our overseas locations. Now, many overseas locations are closed or working with reduced manpower resources. Therefore, the rapidity of future deployments depends on how quickly we can replace those mobility forces and build up the infrastructure.

CINCTRANSCOM, General Fogelman, recognizes this problem and has his staff working a "Laydown Initiative." Apparently based on the old "force module" concept, the laydown initiative consist of four or five different kinds of equipment and personnel force lists. Labeled as "onload," "tanker task force," "enroute," "offload," and "spoke" packages these groups of assets will be immediately available for deployment to open an "airlift" pipeline or augment existing facilities. Development of this concept is ongoing and due for implementation by 1 July 1994.. Unfortunately, the laydown concept can not possibly match the responsiveness of the old inplace forces. Travel time alone would have taken eight to ten hours assuming the same system was being used during the Gulf War buildup. TRANSCOM's own projections call for 3 to 5 days set-up time.³⁹

In July 1990, the 322 Airlift Division, with dual responsibilities to the Military Airlift Command (MAC) and United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE), had 24-hour airlift control centers at Ramstein AB and Rhein

Main AB, Germany, Torrejon AB, Spain, and RAF Mildenhall, UK.

Although exact numbers varied, each location had aerial port, maintenance, and C² assets. In fact, Ramstein had the European Airlift Control Center with over 100 airlift controllers, logistic controllers, intelligence specialists, airspace and diplomatic clearance specialists, and numerous other experts. These around-the-clock command centers were eventually augmented, but several days, virtually weeks, into the crisis.⁴⁰

Their significance cannot be overstated. An example to illustrate their contribution, Technical Sergeant Sue Baruth, a diplomatic clearance technician with the European Airlift Control Center, repeatedly solved problems of last minute changes in airlift routing due to full parking ramps and aircraft breakdowns. Sergeant Baruath was able to fix these problems because she had done that same job daily for three years. She enjoyed the first name, personal recognition needed to work with the airspace managers of the European nations. Favors were done, corners were cut, because this Sergeant was a reliable, recognized expert. A deployed asset, a new comer would obviously not have enjoyed that status.⁴¹

Another example of potential problems, theater familiarity, strongly impacts the laydown concept. For example, Bitburg, Spangdalem, Hahn, and Zweibrucken Air Bases in Germany were well known to most Air

Force personnel in 1990. However, each Air Base had unique characteristics and recent changes by July 1990. On several occasions, stateside controllers launched flights into these and other bases which just would not work. European controllers were repeatedly left "holding the bag" and had to sort out the parking problems.⁴²

Stateside controllers, logisticians, and technical experts were needed to augment the European-based people. They learned quickly and, in the end, had all the expertise and local familiarity they needed. The point is that the early days/weeks were almost exclusively reliant on the people who were stationed in Europe.

Today, all of the units at Ramstein, Rhein Main, and Mildenhall have been significantly reduced. Torrejon is virtually closed. A small portion of the Torrejon unit has moved to NAS Rota, Spain, a much smaller parking ramp. The European Airlift Control Center has relinquished most of their people, equipment and responsibility to Air Mobility Command's Tanker Airlift Control Center at Scott AFB, Illinois.

How significant these situations may become depends on public expectations and international events. If Iraq again invades Kuwait, but continues to roll south toward Saudi Arabia, it will be improbable the US can respond with as much force in the same time. The result might be that we will need to keep US forces in the Gulf indefinitely. Worse yet, we may have to fight our way back into the Saudi Arabia oil fields. The

cost in lives and money may not be politically acceptable. The same situation with similar consequences could be projected in Korea.

Our options are just as politically difficult now. Reverse the headlong flood of returning US forces and the Congress must explain why they are closing stateside bases while maintaining expensive overseas infrastructure. Repairing the existing airlift fleet or buying new airplanes costs big money when budgets are all under downward pressures. Only the American public can change the political emphasis, yet military leaders must first tell the story. If the average American citizen believes the US military can now duplicate the mobility portion of Desert Shield, they are mistaken. The reality check requires that military leaders accurately report the situation and the risk. Until our mobility doctrine has a realistic strategy with resources to make it work, the United States ability to employ its military superiority with overwhelming force will take days, if not weeks, to move.

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